

REMARKS

Allowance of this application is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

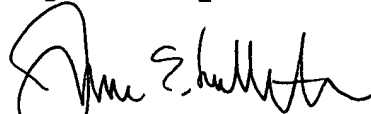
New claim 17 highlights further patentable features of the present invention. The attached drawing illustrates one example of what is meant by "closed sections."

It is submitted that the applied prior art of record (Lau et al., USPN 5,873,906) does not disclose or suggest a linking means that links together the two adjacent annular units to form a plurality of closed sections oriented approximately parallel to a longitudinal axis of the prosthesis structure.

For at least the reasons given in the response filed April 15, 2002 and the above comments, it is submitted that claims 1-17 are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Lau et al. Thus, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

No new fees are deemed necessitated by this Amendment.

Respectfully submitted,



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